



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

For Immediate Release:
March 2, 2007

Contact: Eileen Force
414-286-8504

BARRETT, BAUMAN DEMAND ANSWERS FOR LAPSES IN CARE
City officials seek explanation for violation of operating agreement in light of recent death at County-monitored rooming house

MILWAUKEE – Mayor Tom Barrett and Alderman Robert Bauman today called on the City’s Board of Zoning Appeals to schedule a hearing to review operations at West Samaria, a transitional living facility at 2713 W. Richardson Place where a man with schizophrenia was found dead last month.

The City of Milwaukee’s Department of Neighborhood Services today concluded that a violation of the plan of operation occurred and issued an order revoking the occupancy permit. If the order is not appealed, the next step would be to placard the building.

The owner, Tri-Corp, is a contractor with Milwaukee County and will have seven days to respond by scheduling an appeal before the Board of Zoning Appeals. Once the hearing takes place, the Board will then make a judgment as to whether the approved plan was adhered to or direct a change in operation. The board may also uphold the order of the Department to revoke the occupancy and then afford time for residents to find new housing – up to 30 days.

Currently, there are 92 residents authorized to live in the 66-unit facility. The plan of operation states that clients would be provided three meals a day and that every resident be case managed by a professional case manager and/or nurse. The plan also states that there will be “monitoring of general health and well-being of clients” and “day-to-day living issues.”

-more-

Barrett/add one

3/2/07

“We need answers,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “Why is this not working? Where is the breakdown? Was the County upholding its agreement to monitor the care these residents were receiving or just sending these operators a check and turning a blind eye? Was the operator upholding his agreement to provide meals and day-to-day monitoring? How is it possible that a man was lying dead for up to four days and no one knew? We need to make this work. We are talking about our most vulnerable members of society and it is our shared responsibility to make sure they are safe and well-cared for.”

“The ongoing problems at West Samaria are a disgrace,” Alderman Bauman added. “However, this situation was preventable. Several months ago I expressed grave concerns for the health, safety and welfare of the residents of West Samaria at a hearing before the Board of Zoning Appeals. I opposed the continued operation of this building by Tri-Corp Housing, Inc. I argued that Tri-Corp Housing’s track record demonstrated little regard for the well being of their clients. My concerns were denounced by the defenders of West Samaria and ultimately rejected by the Board of Zoning Appeals when they issued a special use permit for West Samaria. Now we have another incident of substandard care and supervision.”

Bauman continued, “It is fortunate that there will be another opportunity to go before the Board of Zoning Appeals to present the facts and hold Tri-Corp Housing accountable.”

City officials have offered to work with the County to locate possible residences for these clients and have also offered assistance with landlord assessment.

“We need an explanation of what went wrong, and an assurance that these breakdowns will be prevented in the future,” concluded Barrett.